



Members of the 267th Military Police Company prepare to raise the Tennessee flag at their camp near Um Qasr, Iraq.

267th Military Police Company in Iraq: A Testament to Versatility

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The 267th Military Police Company, Tennessee Army National Guard (ARNG), had the honor of being one of the first Tennessee ARNG units in Iraq and in Baghdad. Its Soldiers set the standard for professionalism and their “can do” spirit made them an invaluable asset to the 800th Military Police Brigade during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Preparing to Deploy

In the summer of 2002, the 267th Military Police Company was training on railhead and convoy security operations for the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tennessee ARNG, at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California. Upon successful completion of that training, the unit deployed back to its home station to focus on individual weapons qualification and military operations on urbanized terrain training to prepare for the following year’s annual training (AT). That AT would be put on hold, though, because in October 2002, the company was alerted for possible deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism. The unit mobilized a few weeks later.

The combat support unit was ordered to deploy for a possible mission as a guard company performing enemy prisoner of war (EPW) and internment/resettlement (I/R) operations. The company

reconfigured and mobilized as ordered. The company commander quickly reorganized the unit manning roster and restructured the company organization from four platoons with a headquarters platoon to three platoons under a small operations cell. The company deployed with all its organic vehicles, equipment, and weapon systems, planning for a more flexible, combat-effective unit. Following premobilization training that covered EPW and I/R operations, the company deployed to Fort Dix, New Jersey, in January 2003.

Fort Dix

At Fort Dix, the company was attached to an Army Reserve military police battalion that had the mission to build and operate the first long-term EPW theater internment facility (TIF). The battalion’s units stayed on station for a month conducting field-training exercises in EPW and I/R operations. The

exercises focused on transporting and processing EPWs, performing sustainment operations, and ensuring TIF security and force protection. These invaluable lessons learned were quickly incorporated into the battalion's and company's standard operating procedures, tactics, and techniques. After successfully completing all training, the 267th Military Police Company deployed to Kuwait in February.

Boots on the Ground

The company landed at Kuwait International Airport, where it was stunned by the drastic climate change from the snow-covered ground at Fort Dix. The company was escorted to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, where the soldiers acclimatized themselves to the heat and executed a crucial area security mission at the Class V theater supply area (TSA). Before the unit's vehicles arrived in Kuwait, the unit began 22 days of 24-hour operations securing the TSA with no support, while other units trained for possible combat action. The mission involved static posts, roving patrols, and entry control point operations. The company's equipment arrived later in February and was off-loaded, and the company got new orders to provide combat escorts for the transport of supplies for the TIF and other units. The 267th began transferring its containers and construction materials through Kuwait in preparation for combat operations.

Camp Coyote

Late in March, most of the company moved into Tactical Assembly Area (TAA) Coyote to prepare for movement into Iraq, while one platoon remained at Camp Arifjan to finish escorting supplies and construction materials for an engineer battalion. During



The 267th Military Police Company heads into Iraq from Kuwait.

the move, the unit came under Scud missile attack and was ordered to mission-oriented protective posture 1 status, unaware that ground combat had begun. The next few days resulted in repeated nuclear, biological, and chemical alerts as final planning and rock drills took place. Part of the battalion moved into Iraq to establish Camp Bucca, named after a New York City firefighter who died at the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001.

In the early days of the conflict, the Soldiers of the 267th Military Police Company, securing the rear of the battalion's main body convoy, moved through the border town of Safwan and were greeted by crowds of Iraqi citizens begging for food and water. The main body pushed through war-torn southern Iraq, where recent combat was apparent from the destroyed Iraqi vehicles that still smoked along the highway. Iraqi civilians were already looting the destroyed vehicles and celebrating. The main body of the company pulled up for a rest halt at the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force corps holding area for the evening. The following morning, during a severe sandstorm that blinded the main convoy and severely slowed movement, the main body linked up with the battalion advance party and conducted security for the base camp during initial construction of the TIF by Army engineers.

The company's platoons performed a number of escort missions, including escorting supplies, follow-on personnel, and mail to Camp Bucca. One of the platoons also conducted various missions for a psychological operations (PSYOP) battalion, as well as performing personal security details for a high-ranking officer. That platoon made 24 missions into Iraq, covering over 7,000 miles, and entered the city of Baghdad with the PSYOP battalion. Spending three days in Baghdad to provide force protection and assist in maneuver and mobility support operations (such as setting up roadblocks and checkpoints, patrolling the streets, and directing military and civilian traffic), the platoon helped secure buildings in the city. Another platoon continued executing convoy security missions to TAA Coyote, Camp Bucca, and Baghdad. By this time, the company's platoons were spread across 400 miles in a combat zone and operating independently of each other.

Meanwhile, the original site for the TIF was deemed unsuitable. A new location for the TIF was chosen, outside the port of Um Qasr and adjacent to



Soldiers from the 267th Military Police Company inspect an uncovered cache of Iraqi supplies.

Camp Freddy (an EPW holding area run by British forces). The 2d Platoon began diverting supplies to the new area of operations (AO) and helped the battalion and the engineers construct the new facility.

Camp Bucca, Area Security, and EPW Operations

The 1st Platoon, providing area security at the original Bucca site and convoy escorts for engineer missions, stayed in place to protect the site and the engineers. After five days, the platoon's Soldiers moved on to the new AO, where their mission was to provide area security and force protection during construction and to support counterinsurgency operations. They executed daytime and nighttime patrols, identifying unexploded ordnance (UXO), ammunition caches, and weapon caches. They established observation posts and conducted quick-reaction force (QRF) operations. The missions also involved the apprehension of EPWs during a nighttime escape attempt and the control of local civilians who attempted to force entrance into the facility looking for family members. The 267th Military Police Company tactical operations center (TOC) had command and control (C2) for all area security and base camp defense operations during this period. Most of 2d Platoon joined 1st Platoon at Camp Bucca, leaving a squad to secure TAA Coyote. By mid-April, 2d Platoon conducted security operations of the AO and aided in the construction of the TIF. The company headquarters aided the battalion in the transfer of prisoners from British to US control. During area security operations, 267th Military Police

Company patrols apprehended two more escaped EPWs; identified and cleared more than 200 enemy fighting positions; identified 500 mortar and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) rounds; and captured and destroyed a .51-caliber machine gun, three 82-millimeter mortar tubes, and three RPG weapons systems. A downed unmanned British drone was also discovered by patrols.

By late April, 3d Platoon was again linked up with the company. All EPWs were now transferred to US control, and the company began performing EPW operations at the newly constructed TIF. By May, all equipment was transferred from TAA Coyote, which was shut down, and the remaining Soldiers from 2d Platoon arrived at Camp Bucca. At first, members of the company believed that the unit would be redeploying home when all prisoners were released after the cessation of major ground combat operations on 1 May 2003. Over the next few months, many EPWs were repatriated and attempts were made to draw down their numbers at the facility. Many were transferred to Baghdad Central Correctional Facility (BCCF) at Abu Ghraib, and the prisoner population at Camp Bucca dropped. Soon, however, BCCF reached capacity and the population at Camp Bucca began to grow once again.

From April to mid-October, the 267th Military Police Company provided security for several thousand prisoners. The unit conducted internal and external QRF operations, provided security during family visitations, and assured base defense. The company



A Soldier from the 267th Military Police Company searches an Iraqi fighting position outside Um Qasr.

responded to numerous riots and apprehended more than 15 prisoners attempting to escape.

Convoy Security, Base Defense, and Abu Ghraib

In mid-October, the company began to transition from TIF operations to area security and convoy security duties. Platoons rotated from 24-hour area security and QRF operations to escorting military personnel, contractor employees, and logistical vehicles. Soldiers from the 267th Military Police Company escorted more than 3,000 EPWs and performed more than 25 detainee transfer missions. They logged more than 51,000 miles escorting prisoners for transport by bus, 5-ton trucks, and aircraft. The unit's Soldiers also logged 70,000 miles conducting 366 security patrols and 50,000 miles conducting 776 escort missions. The unit TOC was C2 for all base defense, QRF operations, and escort missions and coordinated all aspects of the camp's escape action plan, from QRF employment to the use of military police dogs for tracking. During area security missions, 416 pieces of UXO were discovered in the patrol area, including several caches of 7.62-millimeter and 25-millimeter rounds, various

antipersonnel and antiarmor mines, RPGs, and 60-millimeter and 80-millimeter mortar rounds. The TOC coordinated with British explosive ordnance disposal personnel for the removal and destruction of the UXO. The company redeployed to Camp Arifjan when "mission complete" was declared and later returned to Fort Dix. The unit returned to home station in February 2004.

Conclusion

The members of the 267th Military Police Company will never forget Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The Soldiers traveled thousands of miles and performed numerous escort missions. The company performed exceptionally in all AOs until it returned to its home station in February 2004. Its Soldiers and leaders rapidly adapted to an ever-changing battlefield and skillfully synchronized multiple tasks. Platoons often acted independently throughout a broad spectrum of missions with little or no support. The Soldiers of the 267th Military Police Company are a testament to the versatility and flexibility of the Military Police Corps and the demand for the "Force of Choice" on the battlefield.